

6210.2 - Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility, Victoria, Dec 2010

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Summary

Contents

CONTENTS



Introduction

Not in the Labour Force - Reasons for Not Participating

Work-Life Balance, Work Preferences and Flexibility.

Preface: Policy Context - Transport

PREFACE: POLICY CONTEXT - TRANSPORT

Understanding journey-to-work commuting patterns is central to developing and prioritising plans and programs and conducting research on transport issues. The *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility* survey will assist transport and planning agencies to understand the extent of flexible workplace arrangements and the factors which discourage workforce participation.

These factors include: the availability and use of flexible working arrangements; barriers to using flexible working arrangements; workplace conditions which may encourage people who have left the labour force to return, and work and family balance among the working population.

The *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility* survey will help contribute to understanding how and why demand for transport is changing as Victoria's population grows and patterns of employment change, how these changes might impact transport demand in the future, and whether increasing workplace flexibility is a possible solution.

Preface: Policy Context - Female Participation

PREFACE: POLICY CONTEXT - FEMALE PARTICIPATION

The nature and extent of women's participation in the labour market affects women's economic status now and into the future. It can also affect the quality of their lives and those of their families.

Increased female labour market participation can deliver economic benefits to women, their

families and the community. Understanding women's use of flexible work arrangements, their work preferences, and their perception of work and life balance will help build an understanding of the factors affecting women's participation in the workforce, thereby enabling policy makers to assess the potential benefits or otherwise of increasing the availability of flexible working arrangements.

The *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey* will contribute a greater understanding in the public domain of the extent of flexible working arrangements in the Victorian labour market, the experiences and needs of Victorians for flexible work arrangements, and barriers to participation for those not in the labour force.

About this Release

This publication presents findings from the 2010 State Supplementary Survey - Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility. The survey was conducted during December 2010 throughout Victoria.

The survey provides a snapshot of the extent to which flexible work options enable and encourage people to participate in the workforce and thereby increase labour productivity. The survey measured the demographic characteristics of households according to several themes: persons not in the labour force and not on long-term unpaid leave; current employment characteristics; work preferences and, employee requests for flexible working arrangements.

Expanded Contents

CONTENTS

Introduction

Not in the Labour Force - Reasons for Not Participating

Work-Life Balance, Work Preferences and Flexibility

Introduction

[Contents >> Introduction](#)

INTRODUCTION

This publication presents results from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) 2010 State Supplementary Survey—*Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility, Victoria 2010*. The survey collected information from Victorian households about labour force participation, barriers to employment, work preferences, and the use of flexible work arrangements.

PARTICIPATION AND FLEXIBILITY

The labour force participation rate is the labour force (employed and unemployed) as a percentage of the usually resident civilian population aged 15 years and over (ABS 2011). Individual participation choices can be influenced by a range of social and economic factors, including education and training, availability of childcare, workplace culture, workplace policies and procedures and employer attitudes (DIIRD 2008).

Labour market participation has been identified as an emerging policy challenge for Australia. The Commonwealth Treasury (2010) has acknowledged slower population growth and an ageing

population as long-term risks for national and state economies, as more people leave the workforce and labour supply pressures increase with declining participation rates.

Research has suggested that understanding working preferences and actual participation in the labour market may help identify potential for improving participation (Abhayaratna and Lattimore 2006). Exploring the barriers to work—particularly for groups such as mature-aged people and women with families—as well as the prevalence of conditions which could reduce those barriers, may serve to highlight opportunities to minimise the impact of declining participation rates (Commonwealth Treasury 2010. BCA 2007).

One factor affecting participation in work is the availability of flexible working arrangements. Victoria's *Workforce Participation Taskforce* reported in 2005 that greater flexibility in the workplace, along with improved choices for individuals to balance work and family responsibilities, can assist those shifting into or out of the workforce (DVC 2005). The Commonwealth Treasury (2010) has also identified lack of workplace flexibility, among other factors, as a potential barrier to participation for those who wish to join or remain in the workforce.

Flexibility in the workplace includes arrangements such as flexible work hours, time off to attend to personal and family matters, part-time work, job sharing, and work-from-home. In recent decades, as more women have moved into the workforce, demand has increased for flexible arrangements to help both women and men manage family commitments (Drago et al 2009). International organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Union and the International Labour Organisation have promoted the use of flexible work arrangements to ease labour market rigidity, encourage employment, and assist work-life balance and gender equity in the workplace (Zeytinoglu et al 2009).

The *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey* provides data about the extent of flexible working arrangements in the Victorian labour market, the experiences and needs of Victorians for flexible work arrangements, and barriers to participation for those not in the labour force. Through providing data on working preferences, participation and the prevalence of opportunities for participation through flexible arrangements, the *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey* supports informed decision-making for addressing challenges to labour force participation and improving work-life balance for Victorians.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND POPULATIONS

The *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility* survey was conducted during December 2010 in Victoria as a supplement to the monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS). There are some unique characteristics of the survey that should be taken into account when making comparisons to other ABS publications.

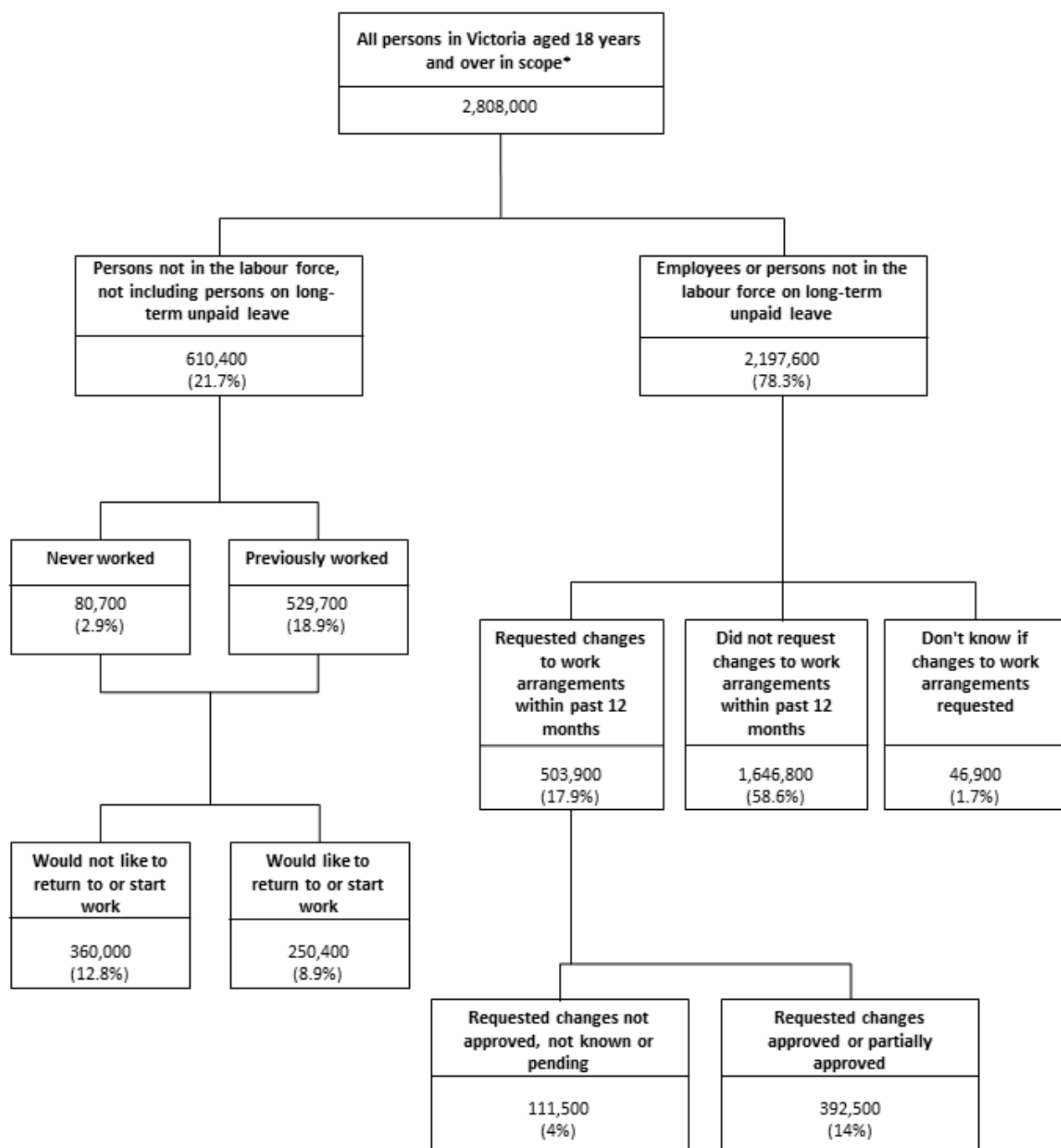
Persons of two labour force status definitions were included in the survey: 'Employed' and 'Persons not in the Labour Force'. However, as this survey describes workforce participation and flexibility, these populations have been defined slightly differently to how they are defined in the Labour Force Survey, and other ABS publications (for more information, see the Glossary).

The ABS normally categorises persons on long-term unpaid leave for four weeks or more as persons "not in the labour force". For the purposes of the *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey*, as these people have been granted long-term unpaid leave from a job, and are in a position to provide data about flexible working arrangements they have been grouped together with employees, in the "Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave" category. These people on long-term unpaid leave have therefore been excluded from the persons not in the labour force category, labelling this group as "Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave".

[Back to top](#)

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework for the *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey*:

Figure 1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



* Excluded from the scope of this survey:

- Unemployed persons
- Persons under 18 years of age
- Full time students under 25 years of age
- Persons 65 years and older permanently not intending to work
- People working in their own business
- People permanently unable to work
- Voluntary or unpaid workers waiting to start a new job
- Persons in very remote Indigenous Community Frame (ICF) collection districts (CD) or in Special Dwellings

Note: Percentages are a proportion of the total population for all persons in Victoria aged 18 years and over in scope of the survey.

Exclusions were also made to the scope of the survey. In particular, due to the survey's interest in employees' access to and need for flexible working arrangements, those employed in their own businesses were excluded. As a result, the survey refers to in-scope employed persons as 'employees'¹ to distinguish them from the standard definition of 'employed persons'.

The survey also excludes sub-populations which were unlikely to be affected by the availability of flexible working arrangements: people actively looking for work; people permanently unable to work; people 65 years and over not intending to work, and full-time students under 25 years of age.

The two main populations included in the survey results are therefore:

- Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave;
- Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave

[Back to top](#)

Footnotes

¹The definition of 'employee' in this publication differs from the standard Labour Force definition by its exclusion of a 'person who operates their own incorporated enterprise with or without hiring employee', and therefore direct comparisons should not be made (see Glossary).

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Not in the Labour Force - Reasons for Not Participating

Contents >> Not in the Labour Force - Reasons for Not Participating

NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE - REASONS FOR NOT PARTICIPATING

Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave

Persons not in the labour force are those who are not employed or unemployed (see Glossary). In September 2010, approximately 16% of people who were not in the labour force were considered to have a *marginal attachment* to the labour force—that is, if the definition of employed or unemployed were to change, they would be included (ABS 2010). Many of those marginally attached who would like to work could move into the labour force if their availability to start work or labour market conditions changed.

The *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey 2010* collected information about people classified as not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave. This information includes whether respondents wanted to start or return to work, and if so, what arrangements would need to be in place to ensure that work fits in with family and social commitments. The survey also collected information on why those who had previously had a job left that employment, and why they were not currently looking for work.

In 2010, Australia's labour force participation rate was the ninth highest in the OECD (OECD 2011). However for some groups, including older men and women (55 to 64 years) and women of child-bearing age (25 to 44 years), Australia's rates have been low compared with other developed countries (Abhayaratna and Lattimore, 2006). The OECD has also recognised that people receiving disability benefits face major disincentives to work and that there is scope to increase workforce participation for these people (OECD 2008).

This chapter focuses on sub-groups in the population (older people, women of child-bearing age and those with an illness or caring responsibilities) and looks at their reasons for not participating, and what arrangements would be required to encourage their entry to the labour market.

POPULATION OVERVIEW

In December 2010, there were 610,400 people¹ in Victoria who were not in the labour force and not on long-term leave². In brief:

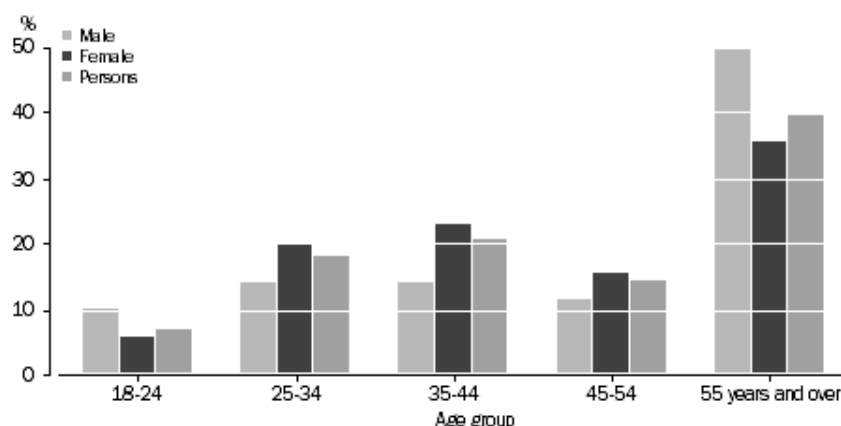
- 72% were female;
- 40% were aged 55 years and over;
- 67% were married;
- 45% lived in a couple family with children;
- 63% were born in Australia;
- 41% were living in households with annual equivalised income of less than \$25,000;
- 70% lived in the Melbourne Major Statistical Region;
- 41% would like to return to or start work; and
- 13% had never worked for pay in any job or business for 2 weeks or longer.

Proportions of people not in the labour force and not on long-term leave² varied with age. The largest proportion of both males (50%) and females (36%) in this group were in the 55 years and over age group. In the 18-24 year age group, there were a larger proportion of males (10%) than females (5.8%). In each of the remaining age groups, there were a larger proportion of females than males. This is consistent with OECD findings that older workers (55 years and over) and

females of child-bearing age (25 to 44 years) tend to have lower workforce participation rates (Abhayaratna and Lattimore, 2006).

Figure 1. POPULATION BY SEX AND AGE GROUP

Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



[Back to top](#)

AREA OF USUAL RESIDENCE

The characteristics of people not in the labour force and not on long-term leave² varied according to whether they lived in Melbourne or the balance of Victoria.

Those who lived in the balance of Victoria were more likely to live in households with an annual equivalised household income of less than \$25,000 compared with people who lived in Melbourne (47% compared with 38% respectively). People living in the balance of Victoria were also more likely to live in couple family households with no children (36%) than people in Melbourne (21%).

People not in the labour force and not on long-term leave² who lived in Melbourne were more likely to live in a household with an annual equivalised household income of \$110,000 or more than were people living in the balance of Victoria (26% compared with 18% respectively). The most prevalent household/family type for people living in Melbourne was the couple family household with children (51%).

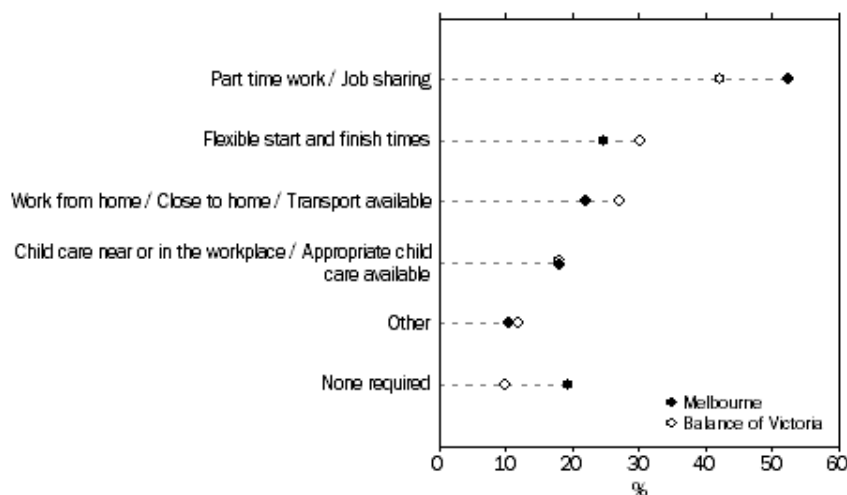
The most common reason that people living in the balance of Victoria left their previous job was due to retirement or because they did not want to work any longer (23% compared with 13% for people living in Melbourne). For people who lived in Melbourne, pregnancy or to have children was the most commonly reported main reason for leaving their previous job (27% compared to 21% for people living in the balance of Victoria).

Males living in Melbourne were more likely to want to return to or start work (44%) than males living in the balance of Victoria (31%). The proportion of females who would like to return to or start work was similar across both regions (41% in Melbourne compared with 43% in balance of Victoria).

People not in the labour force and not on long-term leave² who would like to return to or start work were asked what arrangements would need to be in place to ensure that work fits with family and/or social commitments. Part time work or job sharing was the most commonly reported desired arrangement for both regions of Victoria (52% Melbourne and 42% balance of Victoria).

Figure 2. FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS NEEDED FOR WORK-LIFE BALANCE(a)(b)

Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



(a) Persons who reported that they would like to return to or start work

(b) Components do not sum to 100% as more than one arrangement could have been reported by the respondent

FUTURE INTENTIONS AND PREVIOUS WORKFORCE HISTORY

Two in five (41%) people not in the labour force and not on long-term leave² would like to return to or start work, with similar proportions for males (40%) and females (42%).

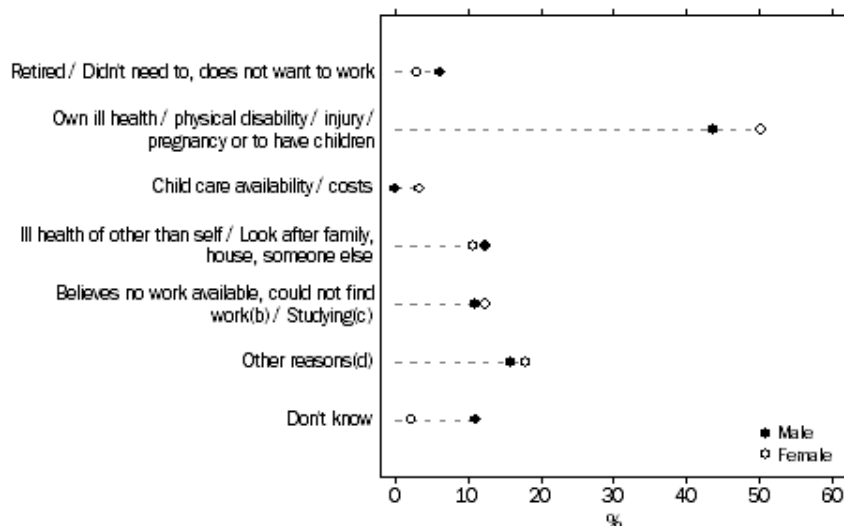
Of those who would like to return to or start work, over half (57%) were aged between 25 and 44 years. People wanting to return to or start work were more likely to be living in a couple family household with children (53%) than in any other household type. People wanting to return to or start work were also most likely to have been out of the workforce for a period of one to five years (33%).

Two in five (42%) people who wanted to return to or start work lived in households with an annual equivalised income of less than \$25,000. Nearly three quarters (72%) of the people who would like to return to or start work lived in Melbourne.

Of the 225,000 people who had previously worked for pay and who would like to return to work, females were most likely to have left their previous job due to pregnancy or to have children (42%), whereas males were most likely to have left their previous employment due to own illness, injury, health condition or disability (38%). When the number of females who left their employment due to pregnancy or to have children is removed from the female population, the proportion of females who left their previous job due to own illness, injury, health condition or disability is 24%, which is lower than the proportion of males who left their previous job for this reason (38%).

For those who would like to return to work but were not currently looking for work, the main reason they were not looking for work was due to own ill health, physical disability, injury, pregnancy or to have children (49%). The proportion of males and females who would like to return to work, but who were not currently looking for work due to own ill health, physical disability, injury, pregnancy or to have children were similar (44% for males and 50% for females).

Figure 3. PERSONS WHO WOULD LIKE TO RETURN TO OR START WORK: MAIN REASON NOT LOOKING FOR WORK(a),
Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



(a) Persons who have previously worked for pay for two weeks or longer

(b) Includes Employers think too young or too old / Lacks necessary schooling, training, skills or experience / Difficulties with language or ethnic background / No jobs

(c) Includes returning to studies

(d) Includes To get married / To have holiday, moved house, spouse transferred / Give others a chance / Welfare payments, pension may be affected / Other family considerations

Half (50%) of the 225,000 people who had previously worked for pay and who would like to return to work reported that the flexible arrangement most required to ensure work fits in with family and/or social commitments was part time work or job sharing. This was followed by flexible start and finish times (26%).

Of the 360,000 people who would not like to return to or start work, 57% were aged 55 years and over. Over one third (36%) of people who do not want to return to or start work had not worked for pay for 10 years or more.

Of the 304,700 people not in the labour force and not on long-term leave², who had previously worked for pay and who did not want to return to work, two in five (40%) were not looking for work due to ill health, physical disability, injury, pregnancy or to have children, with another 38% not looking for work due to retirement or not wanting to or needing to work any longer.

[Back to top](#)

WOMEN

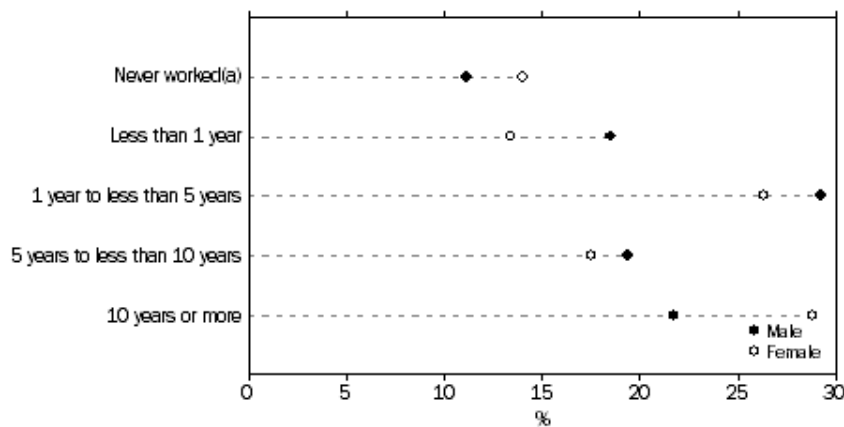
According to ABS data, since 1978 women's labour force participation rates have been lower than men's participation rates (ABS 2011). One of the reasons for women having lower participation rates is that women are often the primary carer in a household. In 2008, 84% of lone parent households in Victoria had females as the lone parent (ABS 2006).

Findings from the *2010 Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility* survey show that females were much more likely to not be in the labour force and not on long-term leave² than men (72% compared with 28% respectively). Of those females not in the labour force and not on long-term leave², nearly half (49%) lived in a couple family with children. Almost two in five (39%) females who were not in the labour force and not on long-term leave² lived in a household with an annual equivalised income of less than \$25,000.

Females were also more likely than men to have been out of the workforce for 10 years or more (29% compared with 22% respectively).

Figure 4. HOW LONG SINCE LAST WORKED FOR PAY

Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010

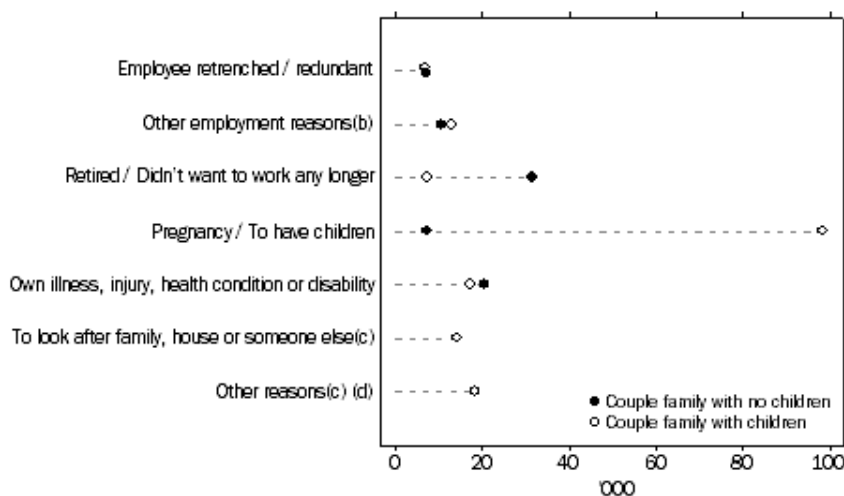


(a) Never worked in a job or business for 2 weeks or more

Females in households with children aged 0 to 4 years were more likely (37%) to have not worked for pay for one year to less than five years than those in households with no children aged 0 to 4 years (22%).

The main reason females who had previously worked for pay left their last job differed by household and family type. For females living in a couple family with children, the highest reported reason for leaving their previous job was due to pregnancy / to have children (98,300). For those in a couple family with no children, the most common reasons for leaving their last job were because they had retired or did not want to work any longer (31,600), followed by own illness, injury, health condition or disability (20,500).

Figure 5. FEMALES: MAIN REASON LEFT PREVIOUS JOB(a)
Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



(a) Persons who have previously worked for pay

(b) Includes Job was temporary or seasonal / Holiday job / Unsatisfactory work arrangements, pay, hours / Own business sold or closed down

(c) Data for Couple family with no children not available for publication

(d) Includes To get married / To have holiday, moved house, spouse transferred / Returned to studies / Other

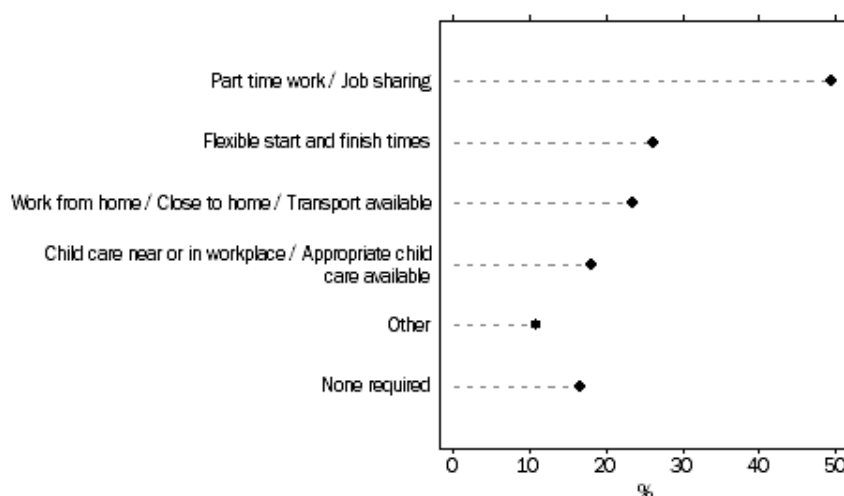
Of females not in the labour force and not on long-term leave², two in five (42%) reported they would like to return to or start work. The proportion aged 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 years who wanted to return to or start work (58% and 63% respectively) was higher than the proportion aged 45 to 54 (44%) and 55 years and over (16%).

Females who were in a couple family with children were more likely to not want to return to work (78% compared with 22% who would like to return to work). In contrast, couple families without children had similar proportions of females who would either like to or not like to return to work (48% and 52% respectively).

For females not in the labour force and not on long-term leave² who would like to return to or start work, the most frequently reported main reason for not looking for work was own ill health, physical disability, pregnancy or to have children (50%). Females who did not want to return to or start work also reported this as their main reason (40%), followed closely by retirement or not wanting or needing to work any longer (35%).

For both male and female respondents who would like to return to or start work, the most commonly reported working arrangements required to ensure that work fits in with family and/or social commitments were part time work or job sharing (49%). Nearly one in five people (18%) reported a need for child care facilities available in or near the workplace or the availability of appropriate child care.

Figure 6. FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS NEEDED FOR WORK-LIFE BALANCE(a)(b),
Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



(a) Persons who reported that they would like to return to or start work

(b) Components do not sum to 100% as more than one arrangement could have been reported by the respondent

[Back to top](#)

OLDER PEOPLE

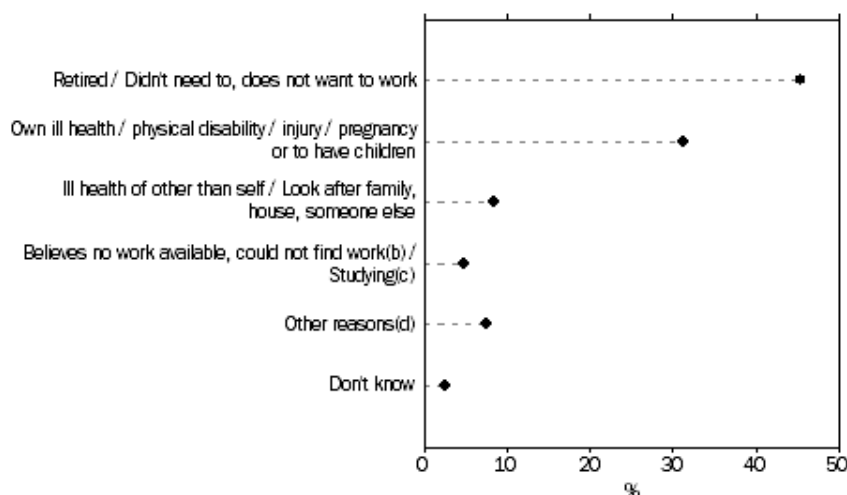
The proportion of Victorians aged 55 years and over is expected to increase from 25% in June 2010 (ABS 2010 b) to 34% in June 2050 (ABS 2006 to 2101). In 2008, Australia's mature age participation rate was 59%, which was higher than the OECD average (56%) but lower than other developed countries including United States, United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand (Commonwealth Treasury 2010).

The largest proportion of males and females not in the labour-force and not on long-term leave² was in the 55 years and over age group (Note, the 55 years and over age group excludes people aged 65 years and over who were permanently not intending to work). Of males not in the labour force and not on long-term leave², half (50%) were aged 55 years and over. Just over one third (36%) of the females were in the 55 years and over age group.

Three in five (62%) people aged 55 years and over (excluding those aged over 65 years and permanently not intending to work) had not worked for pay for the last five years or longer. For people aged 55 years and over, the most commonly reported main reason for leaving their previous job was due to being retired or not wanting to work any longer (33%). Nearly half (45%) of the people in the 55 years and over age group reported that they were not currently looking for work due to retirement or not wanting or needing to work any longer.

Figure 7. PERSONS AGED 55 YEARS AND OVER: MAIN REASON NOT LOOKING FOR WORK(a),

Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



(a) Persons who have previously worked for pay for two weeks or longer

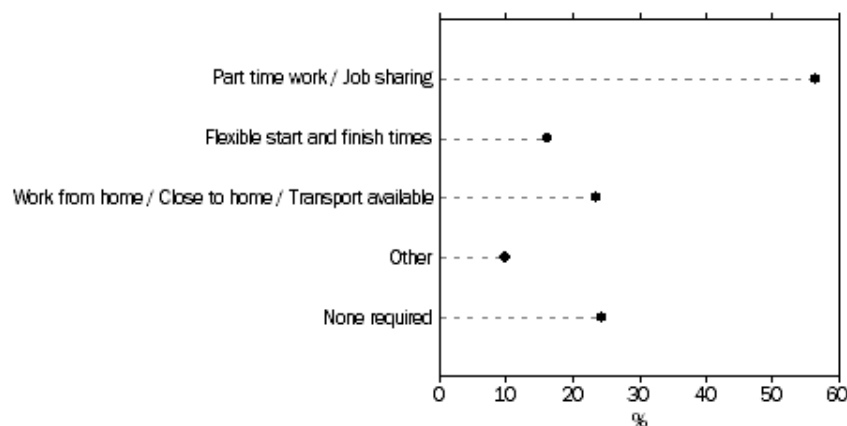
(b) Includes Employers think too young or too old / Lacks necessary schooling, training, skills or experience / Difficulties with language or ethnic background / No jobs

(c) Includes returning to studies

(d) Includes To get married / To have holiday, moved house, spouse transferred / Give others a chance / Welfare payments, pension may be affected / Other family considerations

Of people aged 55 years and over, only 15% would like to return to or start work. The majority of these people (57%) reported that if they were to return to or start work, the flexible arrangement required to ensure that work fits in with family and/or social commitments would be part time work or job sharing.

Figure 8. PERSONS AGED 55 YEARS AND OVER: FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS NEEDED FOR WORK-LIFE BALANCE(a)(b),
Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



(a) Persons who reported that they would like to return to or start work

(b) Components do not sum to 100% as more than one arrangement could have been reported by the respondent

PERSONS WITH AN ILLNESS³ OR CARING RESPONSIBILITIES⁴

Disability policy has emerged as a key economic policy area in most OECD countries, with disabling health conditions on the rise among working-age people (OECD 2010). In 2010, the Australian employment rate for people with a disability or other health problems was 40%, which was low compared with other OECD countries (OECD 2010 b).

Nearly a third (30%) of people not in the labour force and not on long-term leave² left their previous job due to illness³ (21%) or because of caring responsibilities⁴ (9%).

Males were more likely than females to have left their previous job due to illness³ (33% compared with 17% respectively), whereas a similar proportion of males (7%) and females (10%) left their previous job due to caring responsibilities⁴.

Of the people who left their previous job due to illness³, 49% were aged 55 years and over, and another 23% were aged 45 to 54 years. Similarly, of those who left their previous job due to caring responsibilities, 47% were aged 55 years and over, followed by 24% aged 45 to 54 years, and 21% aged 35 to 44 years.

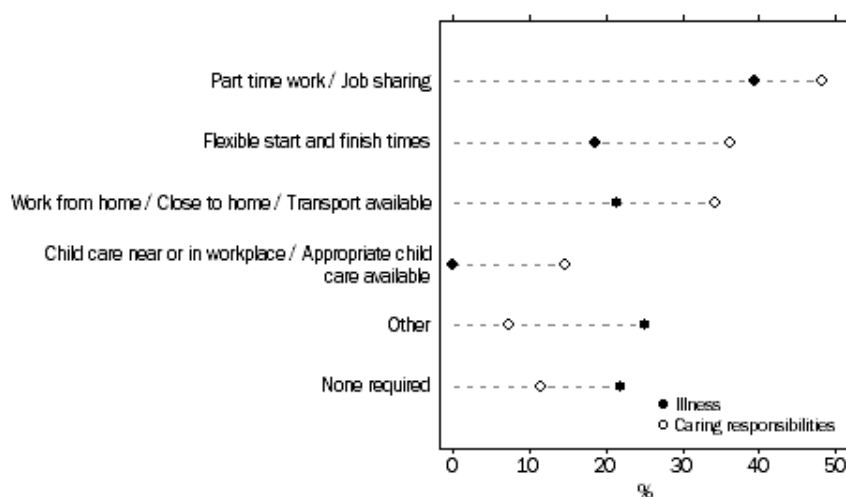
People who had not worked for pay for 10 years or more were more likely to have left their previous job due to illness³ (27%) than people who had not worked for pay less than one year (11%).

Similar proportions of people who left their previous job either due to illness³ or to caring responsibilities⁴ would like to return to or start work (40% and 43% respectively).

Of those who left their previous job due to illness³ and would like to return to work, the most commonly reported arrangement required to ensure that work fits in with family and/or social commitments was part time work or job sharing (39%).

For people with caring responsibilities⁴ who would like to return to work, the most commonly reported flexible arrangements required were part time work or job sharing (48%), followed by flexible start and finish times (36%).

Figure 9. PERSONS(a) WHO LEFT PREVIOUS JOB DUE TO ILLNESS(b) OR CARING RESPONSIBILITIES(c): FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS NEEDED FOR WORK-LIFE BALANCE(d)(e),
Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



(a) Persons who have previously worked for pay

(b) Illness includes 'own illness/injury/health condition/disability'

(c) Caring responsibilities includes 'to look after family/house/someone else'

(d) Persons who reported that they would like to return to or start work

(e) Components do not sum to 100% as more than one arrangement could have been reported by the respondent

[Back to top](#)

Footnotes

¹ Excluded from the scope of this survey are:

- unemployed persons;
- persons under 18 years of age;
- full time students under 25 years of age;

- persons 65 years and older permanently not intending to work;
- people working in their own business;
- people permanently unable to work;
- voluntary or unpaid workers waiting to start a new job;
- persons in very remote Indigenous Community Frame (ICF) collection districts (CD) or in Special Dwellings

² Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave

³ Illness includes 'own illness / injury / health condition / disability'

⁴ Caring responsibilities includes 'to look after family / house / someone else'

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[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

Work-Life Balance, Work Preferences and Flexibility

Contents >> Work-Life Balance, Work Preferences and Flexibility

WORK-LIFE BALANCE, WORK PREFERENCES AND FLEXIBILITY ***Employees, and persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave***

Work-life balance can be defined as the level of reconciliation between people's working and personal lives (Pocock et al 2010). Access to flexible arrangements may help employees achieve better work-life balance outcomes, while also encouraging participation by individuals or groups who have differing needs when balancing work with personal responsibilities.

The availability and use of flexible work arrangements can be governed by a number of factors. Workplace culture can often determine the availability of formal or informal flexible work arrangements (Eaton 2003). Similarly, the sector, or industry (such as education, construction or manufacturing) of the workplace, (Zeytinoglu et al 2009), or the nature of the occupation (Eaton 2003), can also impact the availability and use of flexible arrangements.

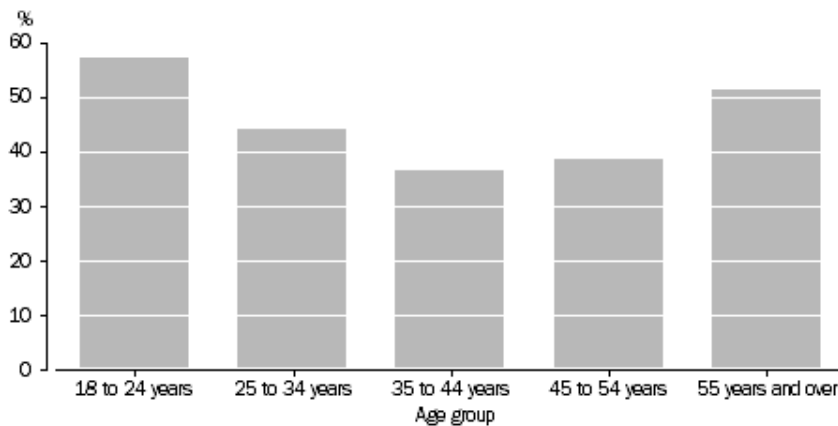
This chapter examines the work preferences, flexible work arrangements, and work and personal life balance of the Victorian workforce. It focuses particularly on groups which have been highlighted as having potential to increase participation—namely women and mature-age workers—and examines these groups in the context of employment characteristics such as industry and occupation.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND FLEXIBILITY

In December 2010, of the 2.2 million employees and people on long-term unpaid leave, 44% (963,700) felt their work and family/social responsibilities were always balanced. A similar proportion (44% or 970,700) felt they were sometimes balanced. Just over one in ten (11% or 232,600) employees felt they rarely or never had work-life balance.

Perceptions of people's degree of work-life balance were highest for the youngest and oldest age groups (18 to 24 years and 55 years and over). Over half of those in both age groups described their work and family/social responsibilities as always balanced (57% and 51% respectively), compared with 37% of those aged 35 to 44.

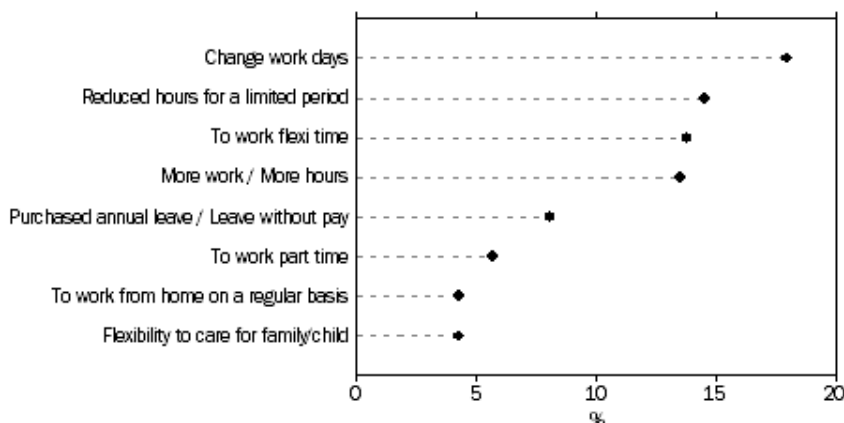
Figure 1. WORK-LIFE BALANCE ALWAYS BALANCED
Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



The likelihood of requesting changes to work arrangements was lower for those with higher levels of work-life balance. Those who rarely or never had work-life balance were more likely to have requested changes to working arrangements (35%) than those who always (19%) or sometimes (25%) had work-life balance.

Overall, 23% (503,900) of employees and people on long-term unpaid leave had requested a change to work arrangements in the 12 months to December 2010. Of those who requested changes, 18% requested a change of work days, 15% requested a reduction in hours for a limited time, 14% requested to work *flexi time*, and 14% requested more work or more hours.

Figure 2. TYPE(S) OF REQUESTED CHANGES TO WORK ARRANGEMENTS(a)
Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010

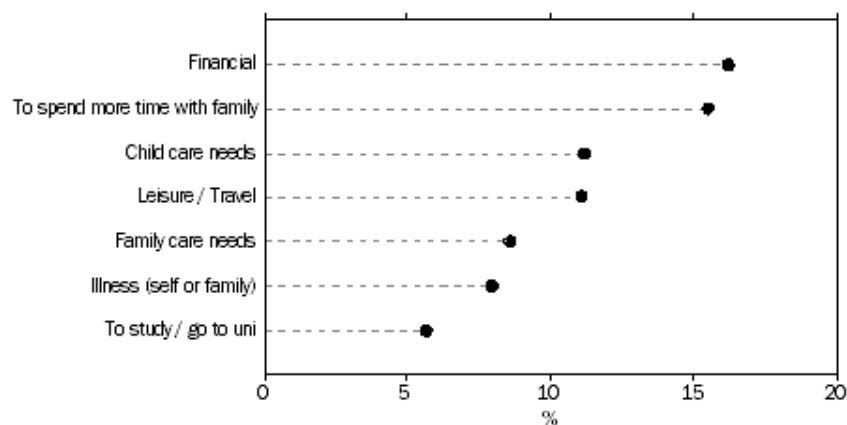


(a) Persons who requested changes to work arrangements in the past 12 months
 Note: 'Other' not included in graph

Main reasons for requesting a change to work arrangements included financial reasons, to spend more time with family (both 16%), child care needs and leisure or travel (both 11%).

[Back to top](#)

Figure 3. MAIN REASON FOR MAKING MOST RECENT WORK ARRANGEMENT REQUEST(a)
Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



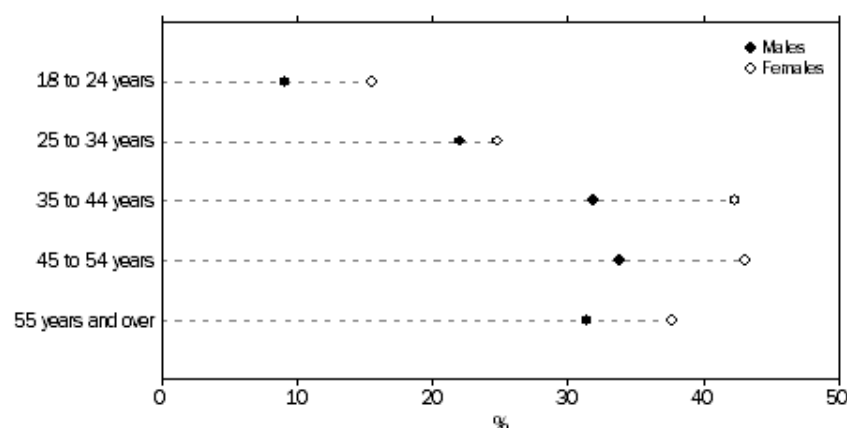
(a) Persons who requested changes to work arrangements in the past 12 months

Of requests for changes to work arrangements made in the 12 months to December 2010, 75% (376,700) were approved, while 18% (88,400) were denied. The remainder (7% or 36,100) were either partially approved or were awaiting a decision.

Of those employees and people on long-term unpaid leave who did not request changes to work arrangements, more than three quarters (76%) did not request changes because they were content with current arrangements.

For employees who usually worked 35 hours or more per week, 29% (456,600) said they would prefer to reduce current hours while 68% (1.1 million) said they would not prefer to do so.

Figure 4. WOULD PREFER TO REDUCE CURRENT WORK HOURS(a)
Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



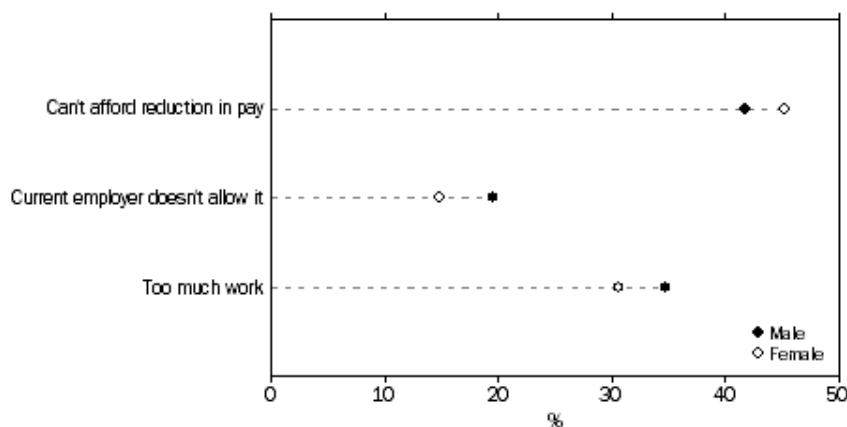
(a) Persons who usually worked at least 35 hours per week

Married people were more likely to prefer to reduce working hours than unmarried people, with 32% of married males and 37% of females preferring a reduction in work hours. For unmarried people, 17% of males and 27% of females would prefer a reduction in working hours.

For employees who worked 35 hours or more per week and preferred fewer hours of work, 59% cited personal reasons, 20% cited family reasons and 19% employment reasons¹.

Barriers to reducing current hours were similar for both males and females. For male employees, 42% said they can't afford a reduction in pay while 35% said they have too much work. Female employees cited similar reasons; 45% said they can't afford a reduction in pay and 31% said they have too much work.

Figure 5. REASONS FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO WORK FEWER HOURS(a)
Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



(a) Persons who usually worked at least 35 hours per week

Note: Graph excludes 'Other' and 'Don't know'.

Work preferences vary by country of birth. Employees who worked 35 hours or more per week and were born in countries other than the main English speaking countries (including Australia) are less likely to prefer to reduce current working hours (20%), compared with those employees born in Australia (30%) and the other English speaking nations (35%).

While the work preferences of female employees were similar for Melbourne and the balance of Victoria (33% and 32% respectively), more male employees in Melbourne would prefer to reduce current hours (28%) than males in the balance of Victoria (23%).

Reasons were similar for both male and female employees in Melbourne and the balance of Victoria in regards to preferring fewer hours¹. Personal reasons were cited by 58% of males in Melbourne and 54% in the balance of Victoria, while 61% of females cited personal reasons in both regions.

In Melbourne family reasons and employment reasons were both cited by 20% of males, with similar proportions of males in the balance of Victoria citing these reasons (21% and 20% respectively). Family reasons were cited by 19% of females in Melbourne and 22% in balance of Victoria, while 18% of females in Melbourne and 14% in balance of Victoria cited employment reasons.

[Back to top](#)

SECTOR, OCCUPATION AND INDUSTRY

Employment characteristics such as sector (public or private), industry and occupation may influence the work preferences, availability and use of flexible work arrangements, and work-life balance for employees.

The majority of employees and people on long-term unpaid leave in both public and private sectors felt their work and private lives were either always balanced (42% for public sector, 44% for private sector) or sometimes balanced (46% for public sector, 44% for private sector).

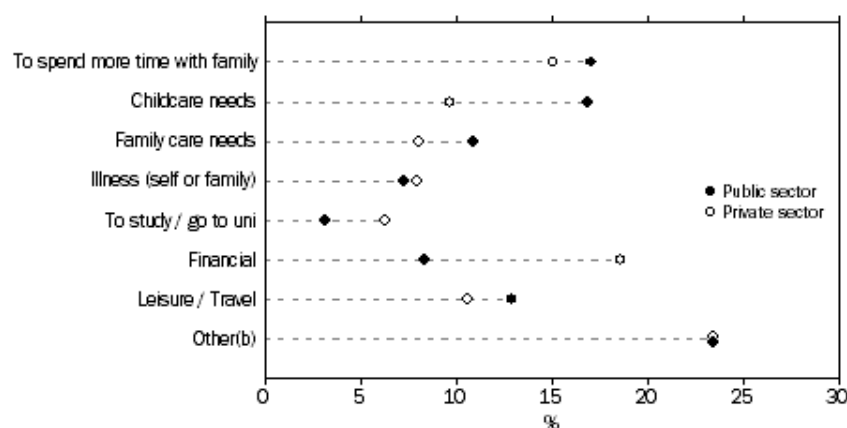
Regardless of the sector, most employees who worked 35 hours or more per week would not prefer to reduce their current work. In the public sector, 63% of respondents indicated they would not prefer to reduce their hours, and 34% indicated they would. Similarly, 69% of private sector employees would not prefer to reduce their hours, while 27% would.

For employees preferring fewer hours of work, private sector employees were more likely than public sector employees to cite personal reasons (60% and 54% respectively). Public sector employees (27%) were more likely than private (18%) to cite family reasons.

Private sector employees were more likely to cite financial reasons than public sector employees for making the most recent work arrangement request (19% and 8.4% respectively). Public sector

employees were more likely than private sector employees to cite child care needs (17% and 10% respectively).

Figure 6. MAIN REASON FOR MOST RECENT REQUEST TO CHANGE WORK ARRANGEMENTS(a)
Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010

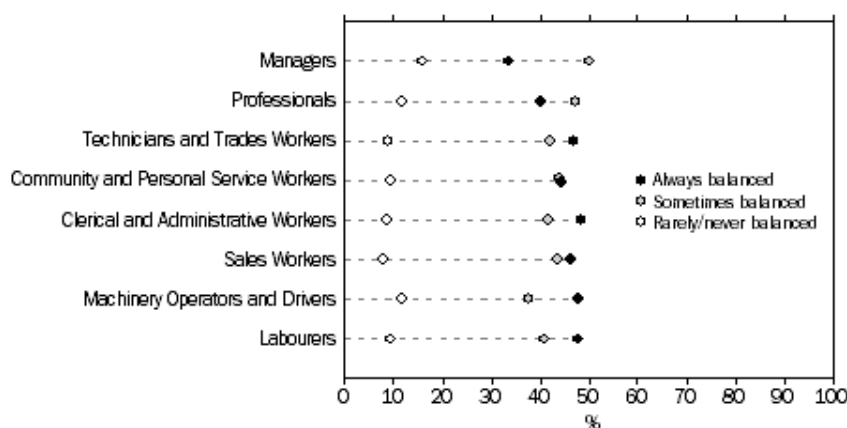


(a) Persons who usually worked at least 35 hours per week
 (b) Includes 'Nature of job', 'Better access to shops/banks', and 'Other'.

Of employees from both sectors who made requests, 76% of public sector and 74% of private sector employees indicated their requests were approved.

While most employees indicated their work and personal lives were either always or sometimes balanced, Managers were more likely to feel their work and personal lives were sometimes balanced (50%) as opposed to always balanced (34%).

Figure 7. WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND OCCUPATION(a)
Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



(a) Persons who usually worked at least 35 hours per week

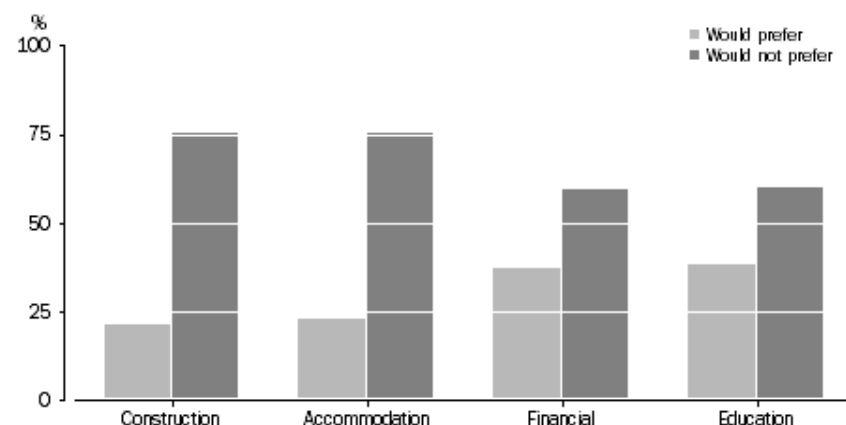
Occupations with the highest proportions of employees requesting changes to work arrangements were Community and Personal Service Workers (28%), Sales Workers (27%), and Professionals (26%). These were higher than proportions for Labourers (16%), and Technicians and Trades Workers (16%). Requests for changes in work arrangements were made by 22% of Managers.

While employees and those on long-term leave in most industries reported their work and personal lives were either always balanced or sometimes balanced, most Construction employees reported their work and personal lives as always balanced (52%, compared with 37% for sometimes balanced), while most Public Administration and Safety employees reported their work and personal lives as sometimes balanced (52%, compared with 39% for always balanced).

Work preferences also varied by industry. Construction employees reported that 75% would not prefer to reduce current working hours. Accommodation and food services employees were similar, with 76% not preferring to reduce current work hours. More than a third of employees in Education and Training (38%) and Financial and Insurance Services (37%) would prefer a reduction in their current working hours.

Figure 8. PREFERENCE FOR REDUCING CURRENT WORKING HOURS: SELECTED INDUSTRIES(a)

Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



(a) Persons who usually worked at least 35 hours per week

Industries with the highest proportions of employees requesting changes to work arrangements were Health Care and Social Assistance (32%), Retail Trade (29%), and Arts and Recreation Services (28%).

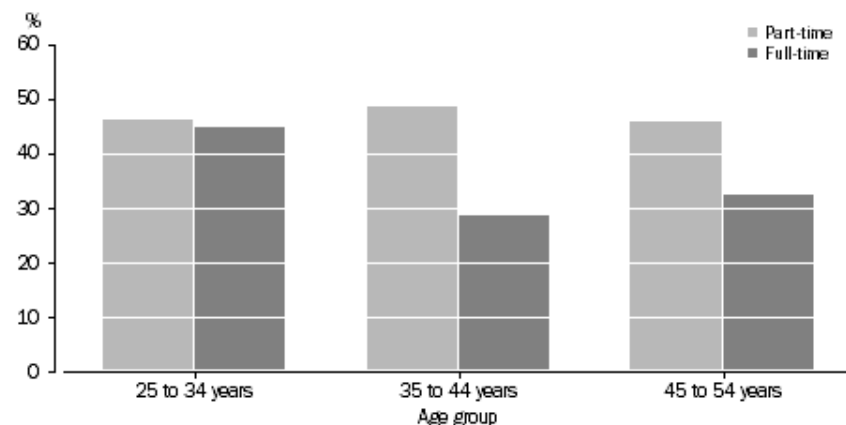
[Back to top](#)

FAMILIES, AND WOMEN OF CHILD-BEARING AGE

Overall, 45% (470,600) of female employees and females on long-term unpaid leave felt that their work and family/social responsibilities were always balanced. Of the different age groups, the lowest proportion with work and life always balanced was females aged 35 to 44 (38%), and of those who worked full time 29% felt they always had work-life balance. In contrast, just under half of females aged 25 to 34 years felt they always had work-life balance regardless of whether they worked full time or part time (45% and 46% respectively).

Figure 9. LEVEL OF BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY/SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Female employees, or females not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010



People living in households with more children were less likely to report high levels of work-life balance than those with fewer or no children. Nearly half (47%) of people without children under 15

years, 41% of those with one child, and 35% of those with two or more children felt their work and social/family responsibilities were always balanced.

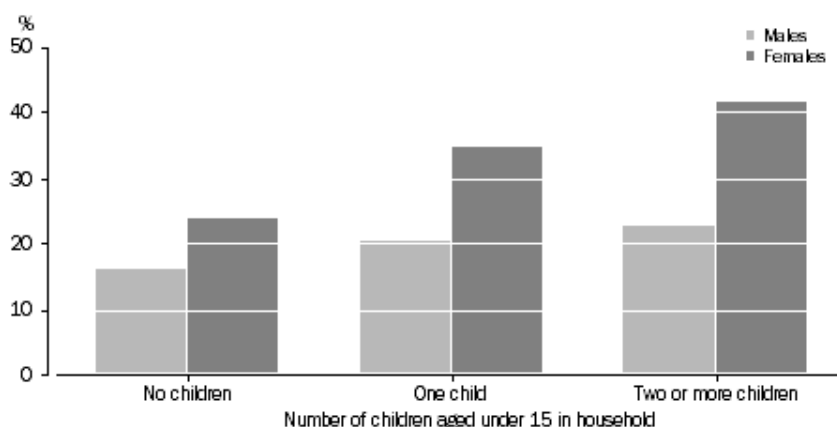
Similar proportions of females with children felt they always had work-life balance regardless of whether they were a lone parent (41%) or in a couple family (44%). Males with children, on the other hand, were more likely to always have work-life balance if they were a lone parent (50%) than if they were in a couple family (40%).

Of the 590,300 females who reported usually working 35 hours or more per week, 16% (12,700) of those aged 18 to 24 years reported that they would like to reduce their current working hours. The proportion of females who would like to work fewer hours increased through the age groups, with those aged 45 to 54 years having the highest proportion (43% or 53,700).

More than a third (34% or 80,200) of female employees and females on long-term unpaid leave aged 35 to 44 years had requested changes to work arrangements in the previous 12 months, compared with 26% (63,000) of those aged 45 to 54 and 21% (33,400) aged 55 and over.

Females with children under 15 years of age were more likely to request changes to work arrangements than those with no dependent children. More than a third (35% or 54,000) of those with one child aged under 15 years, and two fifths (42% or 66,500) with two or more children requested changes, compared with less than a quarter (24% or 175,600) of those without children aged under 15 years.

Figure 10. REQUESTS FOR CHANGES TO WORK ARRANGEMENTS: NUMBER OF CHILDREN
Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010

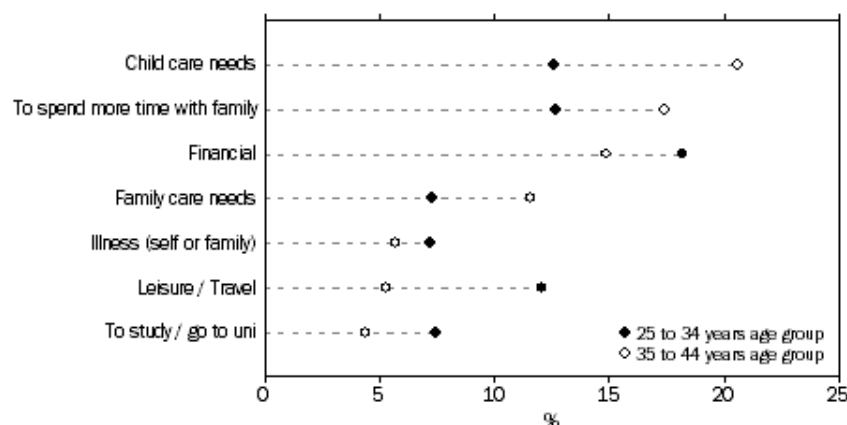


Requests for changes to work arrangements by females varied by age group and family type. Similar proportions of females aged 25 to 34 made requests relating to reducing hours or leave² (37%) and flexibility of hours or location³ (33%). Females aged 35 to 44 were most likely to make a request related to flexibility³, with nearly half (48%) making such a request compared to less than a quarter (24%) requesting reduced hours or leave.

People in couple families with children were more likely to request flexibility³ (42%) over reduced hours or leave² (28%), while single parents were equally likely to request flexibility³ (36%), leave or a reduction in hours² (31%), or more hours of work (26%).

Child care needs was the most common reason for employees and people on long-term unpaid leave aged 35 to 44 years to request a change to working arrangements (21%). The next most commonly reported reasons⁴ for making such requests for those in that age group were to spend more time with family (17%) and financial reasons (15%). Proportions of those aged 25 to 34 years were similar for those having made a request for financial reasons (18%), due to child care needs (13%) or for leisure or travel (12%).

**Figure 11. MAIN REASON FOR MOST RECENT WORK ARRANGEMENT REQUEST(a)
Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010**



(a) Persons who have requested changes to work arrangements

Note: Graph excludes 'Other', 'Nature of job', and 'Better access to shops/banks'.

[Back to top](#)

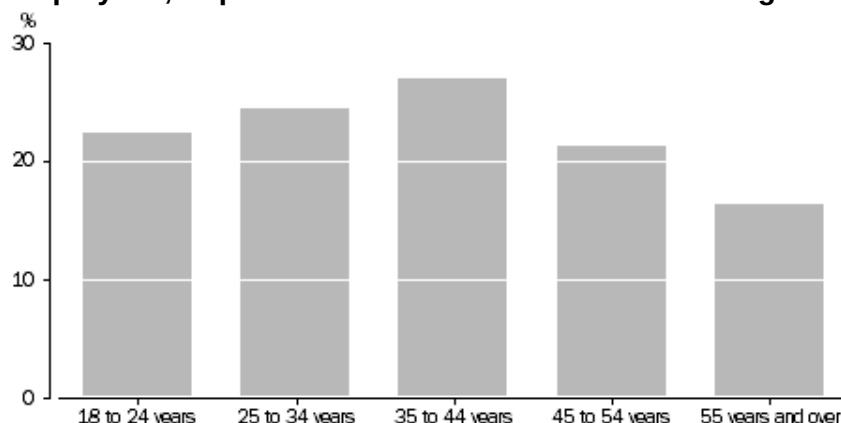
MATURE-AGE WORKERS

Australia's overall participation rate for people aged 55 to 64 is relatively low compared to other advanced industrial nations (Abhayaratna and Lattimore 2006). While some research suggests highly-educated and highly-skilled workers are more likely to remain in the workforce beyond the standard retirement age (Ryan and Sinning 2010), working fewer hours—and in particular a gradual reduction in hours—is a popular option among mature-aged Australians (DPC 2006; Gilfillan and Andrews 2010).

More full-time and part-time employees and people on long-term unpaid leave aged 55 years and over indicated that their work-life balance was always balanced (51%) than sometimes balanced (40%), and 7.3% responded that their lives were rarely balanced or never balanced. Older employees were more likely to respond that their work and personal lives were always balanced than those in other age groups, with the exception of those aged 18 to 24 years (57%).

For employees and those on long-term unpaid leave over 55 years and working 35 hours or more per week, the majority (63%) indicated they would not prefer to reduce current working hours. For those older employees who would prefer fewer hours of work (34%), most (75%) cited personal reasons¹ as the main reason for preferring fewer hours of work.

**Figure 12. REQUESTS FOR CHANGES TO WORK ARRANGEMENTS(a)
Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave, Dec 2010**



The majority of mature-age employees did not request a change to work arrangements (82%). For those mature-age employees who did request changes, the reasons cited for making the most recent request included spending more time with family (18%), leisure/travel (17%) and illness to

self or family (14%).

Footnotes

¹Personal reasons includes: 'Own ill health/injury/disability', 'Only wants/needs limited income', 'Study purposes', 'Social reasons/Recreational activities/Free time' and 'Other personal reasons'. Employment reasons includes: 'Current job regularly involves long hours', 'Work less unpaid overtime' and 'Other employment reasons'. Family reasons includes: 'Caring for children', 'Unable to find suitable child care', 'Caring for ill/disabled/elderly person', 'Pregnancy', 'Home duties' and 'Other family reasons'.

² Including reduced hours for a limited period, part time work, purchased annual leave, and leave without pay.

³ Including flexi time, working from home on a regular basis, change of work days, and flexibility to care for family/child.

⁴ Not including Other reasons, which includes 'Nature of job' and 'Better access to shops/banks' as well as other uncategorised reasons.

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History of Changes

This document was added or updated on 12/08/2011.

07/09/2012

Formatting and style changes to preface documents.

11/08/2011

Changes were made to the following sections of the publication: Introduction; 'Not in the Labour Force - Reasons for Not Participating'; 'Work-Life Balance, Work Preferences and Flexibility'; Explanatory Notes and the Glossary.

Specifically, two references in the Introduction section were discontinued as they were no longer supported by the host website. An in-text reference in 'Work-Life Balance, Work Preferences and Flexibility' section was corrected.

Explanatory Notes

Explanatory Notes

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

1 This publication presents findings from the 2010 State Supplementary Survey, *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility*. The survey was conducted throughout Victoria during the two weeks commencing 5 December 2010.

Survey Sample Design

2 The survey was conducted as a supplement to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Monthly Population Survey (MPS). The MPS is based on a multistage area sample of private dwellings (houses, flats, etc) and a list sample of non-private dwellings (hotels, motels etc). The 2010 State Supplementary Survey was conducted using seven-eighths of the full sample of private dwellings in Victoria that were included in the MPS.

3 For details of the design, scope and coverage of the MPS, readers should refer to the Information Paper: Labour Force Survey Sample Design, 2007 (cat. no. 6269.0), and the Explanatory Notes in any recent edition of the ABS publication Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0).

4 The Labour Force Statistical Regions used for the survey are based on the 2006 Australian Standard Geographical Classification. For further information see Chapter 5 Statistical Region Structure in the Statistical Geography Volume 1 - Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), Jul 2006 (cat. no. 1216.0). Maps of the Labour Force Statistical Regions can be seen in the Downloads Tab of this publication.

Scope

5 Information was collected via interview from any responsible adult aged 18 years and over in the

household.

The following dwellings were excluded from this survey:

- unoccupied private dwellings
- non-private dwellings such as hospitals, hotels, motels and prisons

The following people were excluded from this survey:

- unemployed persons
- persons aged under 18 years
- full time students under 25 years of age
- persons 65 years and older permanently not intending to work
- people working in their own business
- people permanently unable to work
- voluntary or unpaid workers waiting to start a new job
- persons in very remote Indigenous Community Frame (ICF) collection districts (CDs).

For further information refer to Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods, Apr 2007 (cat. no 6102.0.55.001) Sections 18.11 and 18.13

6 The survey was conducted in both urban and rural areas throughout Victoria, and excluded people living in very remote areas who would otherwise have been within the scope of the survey. The exclusion of these people is likely to have had only a minor impact on any aggregate estimates.

Coverage

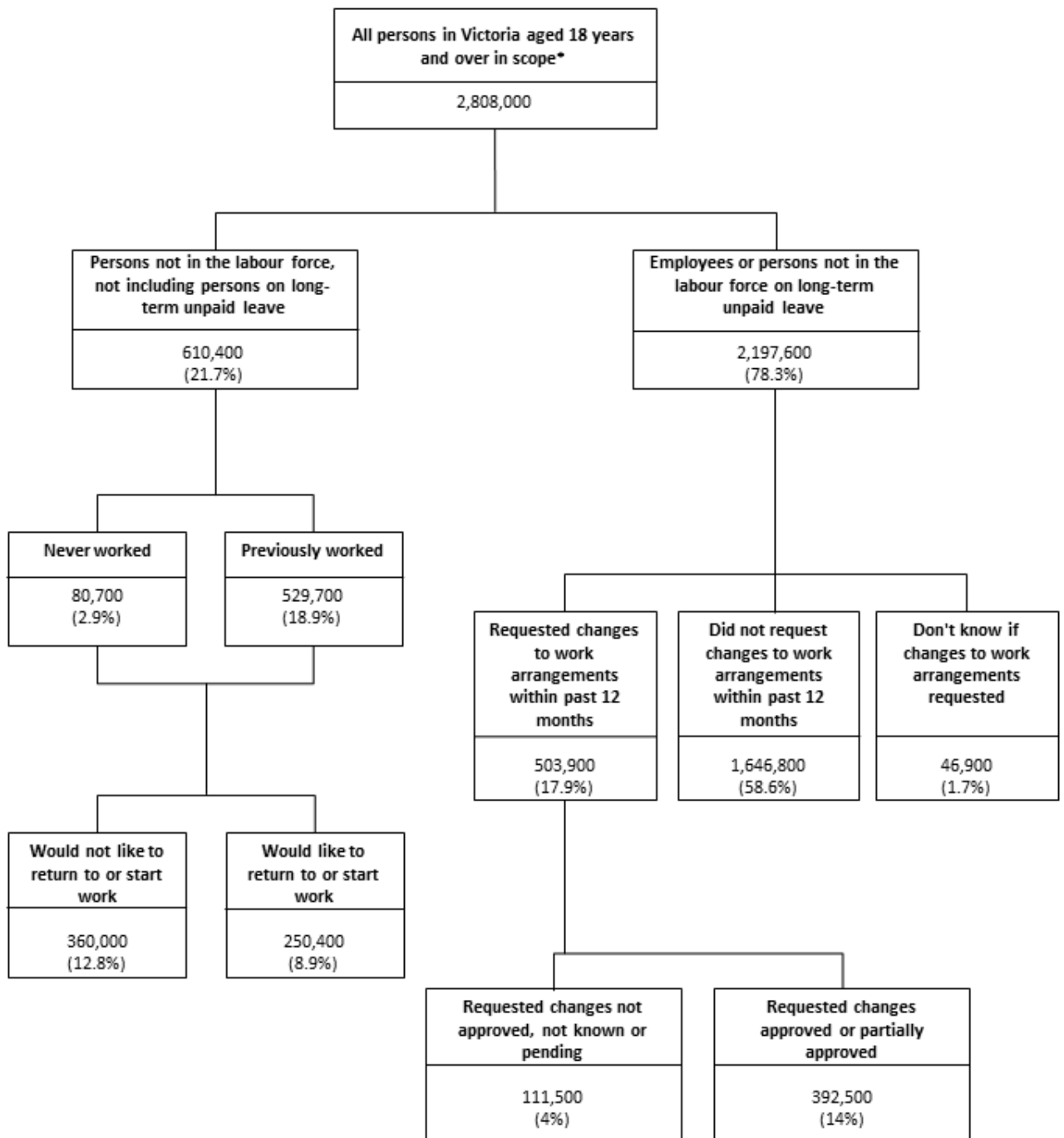
7 Coverage rules were applied to ensure that each person was associated with only one dwelling, and hence had only one chance of selection in the survey.

8 Information was sought from 3,899 households in Victoria and a full response was collected from 3,495 (89%).

[Back to top](#)

Conceptual Framework

9 The following diagram illustrates the conceptual framework for the populations in the publication.



* Excluded from the scope of this survey:

- unemployed persons
- persons under 18 years of age
- full time students under 25 years of age
- persons 65 years and older permanently not intending to work
- people working in their own business
- people permanently unable to work
- voluntary or unpaid workers waiting to start a new job
- persons in very remote Indigenous Community Frame (ICF) collection districts (CD) or in Special Dwellings

Note: Percentages are a proportion of the total population for all persons in Victoria aged 18 years and over in scope of the survey.

[Back to top](#)

Data Collection

10 Information was collected by either a face-to-face or telephone interview, with interviews conducted over a two-week period during December 2010. One responsible adult member of each selected household was interviewed, answering questions regarding themselves and/or other persons within that household who were in scope of the survey.

Effects of rounding

11 Estimates have been rounded, and discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

Acknowledgement

12 ABS publications draw extensively on information provided freely by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations. Their continued cooperation is very much appreciated. Without it, the wide range of statistics published by the ABS would not be available. Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the Census and Statistics Act (1905).

Related publications

13 The ABS produces a wide range of publications relating to demographic, housing, environment and transport statistics. Current publications and other products released by the ABS are available from the Statistics page of the ABS website. The ABS also issues a daily Release Advice on the website which details products to be released in the week ahead.

14 The *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility* survey is not part of the ongoing ABS MPS program. Extreme caution must be used when comparing the 2010 survey with other related publications as differences in scope and methodology exist.

Data available on request

15 Inquiries about these statistics and more detailed statistics than those presented in the publication should be made by contacting the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or Peter Rochester in Melbourne on (03) 9615 7411. Please see Additional Data Available for a list of the data items collected in this survey.

Glossary

GLOSSARY

Actively looking for work

People who were taking active steps to find work. Active steps comprise:

- registering with a Job Network employment agency;
- contacting an employment agency;
- contacting prospective employers;
- answering a newspaper advertisement for a job;
- checking factory noticeboards;
- advertising or tendering for work; and
- contacting friends or relatives.

Balance of Victoria

The Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) divides Victoria into two Major Statistical Regions (MSRs). The Melbourne MSR equates with the Capital City Statistical Division, and the balance of Victoria MSR contains the remainder of the State. For further information refer to Australian Standard Geographical Classification (cat. no. 1216.0).

Dependent child

A dependent child is a person who is either a child under 15 years of age, or a dependent student (see Dependent student below). To be regarded as a child the person can have no identified partner or child of his/her own usually resident in the household.

Dependent student

This refers to a natural, adopted, step, or foster child who is 15-24 years of age and who attends a secondary or tertiary educational institution as a full-time student and for whom there is no identified partner or child of his/her own usually resident in the same household.

Employed (a)

All persons aged 15 years and over who, during the reference week:

- worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind in a job or business, or on a farm (comprising employees, employers and own account workers); or
- worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (i.e. contributing family workers); or
- were employees who had a job but were not at work and were:
 - away from work for fewer than four weeks up to the end of the reference week; or
 - away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week; or
 - away from work as a standard work or shift arrangement; or
 - on strike or locked out; or
 - on workers' compensation and expected to return to their job; or
- were employers or own account workers, who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.

(a) Standard ABS Labour Force definition

Employee (a)

A person who works for a public or private employer and receives remuneration in wages, salary, a retainer fee from their employer while working on a commission basis, tips, piece rates, or payment in kind; or a person who operates their own incorporated enterprise with or without hiring employees.

(a) Standard ABS Labour Force definition

Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave

For *2010 Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey* purposes, 'Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave' are defined as:

- A person aged 18 years and over who works for a public or private employer and receives remuneration in wages, salary, a retainer fee from their employer while working on a commission basis, tips, piece rates, or payment in kind; or

- A person who is away from work for four weeks or more, up to the end of the reference week, and is not paid or expected to be paid for any part of the four weeks up to the end of the reference week.

Equivalised annual household income

Gross annual household income as defined and adjusted using an equivalence scale to facilitate comparisons between households of different size and composition.

Flexi time

Arrangement whereby an employee can take time off work that must be made up at a later date or that has already been accrued by working extra hours (also known as time off in lieu).

Flexible work arrangements

Can include job sharing, telecommuting (working from home), cap on overtime, opportunity to negotiate part time work for full time employees, time in lieu, rostered days off, self rostering, staggered start and finish times, and/or gradual retirement.

Full-time workers

Employed persons who usually worked 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and those who, although usually working fewer than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more during the reference week.

[Back to top](#)

Household

A household is one or more persons, at least one of whom is 15 years and over, usually resident in the same private dwelling.

Industry

Classified according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006 (cat. no. 1292.0).

Job

The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) First Edition, Revision 1 defines a job as a set of tasks performed by one individual. An occupation is a collection of jobs that are sufficiently similar in their main tasks to be grouped together for the classification.

Labour force

For any group, persons who were employed or unemployed, as defined.

Last job

The last job in which employment ceased during the reference period.

Long-term leave

Away from work for four weeks or more, up to the end of the reference week.

Long-term unpaid leave

'Long term leave' as defined and not paid or expected to be paid for any part of the four weeks up to the end of the reference week.

Marginal attachment to the labour force

People who were not in the labour force in the reference week, wanted to work and:

- were actively looking for work but did not meet the availability criteria to be classified as unemployed; or
- were not actively looking for work but were available to start work within four weeks.

The criteria for determining those in the labour force are based on activity (i.e. working or looking for work) and availability to start work during the reference week. The criteria associated with marginal attachment to the labour force, in particular the concepts of wanting to work and reasons for not actively looking for work, are more subjective. Hence, the measurement against these criteria is affected by the respondent's own interpretation of the concepts used. An individual respondent's interpretation may be affected by their work aspirations, as well as family, economic and other commitments.

Not employed

People who were either 'unemployed and looking for work' or 'not in the labour force' as defined.

Not in the labour force

People who were not in the categories 'employed' or 'unemployed' as defined.

Occupation

Classified according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) 2006 (cat. no. 1220.0)

Participation rate

For any group, the labour force expressed as a percentage of the civilian population aged 15 years and over in the same group.

Part-time workers

Employed persons who usually worked fewer than 35 hours a week (in all jobs) and did so during the reference week, or were not at work during the reference week.

Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave

For *2010 Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey* purposes, 'Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave' are defined as people who were not in the categories 'employees, or persons not in the labour-force on long-term unpaid leave' or 'unemployed', as defined.

[Back to top](#)

Private Sector

Includes private businesses and any non-government organisations.

Public Sector

Public sector comprises local government authorities and all government departments and agencies created by, or reporting to, the Commonwealth, or State/Territory Parliaments.

Sector

Classifies employed people according to whether they work for a public or private sector employer as defined.

Special Dwellings

Special dwellings are establishments which provide predominantly short-term accommodation for communal or group living and often provide common eating facilities. They include hotels, motels, hostels, hospitals, religious institutions providing accommodation, educational institutions providing accommodation, prisons, boarding houses, short-stay caravan parks, and may include some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that are not on the Indigenous Communities Framework. For more information see [Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods, Apr 2007](#) (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001).

Unemployed

People aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the reference week, and:

- had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and were available for work in the reference week, or
- were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week, and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then.

Work arrangements

Refers to the amount of hours worked, when these hours are worked and where those hours are worked.

Workforce

For *2010 Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey* purposes, the 'workforce' includes:

Employed persons as defined, excluding:

- persons aged 15 to less than 18 years
- employers and own account workers

Includes persons on long-term unpaid leave, as defined.

Work-life balance

Relates to the extent that employees are able to balance the demands of their work with family and social commitments.

Workplace

For *2010 Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey* purposes, the 'workplace' refers to the place at which employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave carry out work for their employer.

Abbreviations

ABBREVIATIONS

The following symbols and abbreviations are used in the publication.

%	per cent
'000	thousand
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
cat. no.	catalogue number
CD	Collection District
DIIRD	Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development
DPC	Department of Premier and Cabinet
DVC	Department for Victorian Communities
ICF	Indigenous Community Frame
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MPS	Monthly Population Survey
MSR	Major Statistical Region
NSW	New South Wales
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
Qld.	Queensland
RSE	relative standard error
SA	South Australia
SE	standard error
SR	Statistical Region
Tas.	Tasmania
Vic.	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

Additional Data Available (Appendix)

ADDITIONAL DATA AVAILABLE

Introduction

In addition to the statistics presented in this publication, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) can produce customised tables on request. Subject to confidentiality and data request constraints, tables can be produced from the survey by cross-classifying any of the following data items for the relevant survey populations. Inquiries should be made to the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or Peter Rochester in Melbourne on (03) 9615 7411.

Demographics

Aggregations of Collection District (CD) of usual residence ¹

Sex of person

Age of person

Social marital status

Country of birth

Indigenous status

Household Demographics

Area of usual residence

Labour Force statistical region

Household / family type

Number of children in household aged 0 to 14

Number of children in household aged 0 to 4

Number of children in household aged 5 to 9

Number of children in household aged 10 to 14

Number of full-time students aged 15 to 24 in household

Number of dependent children aged 0 to 14 and full-time students aged 15 to 24 in household

Persons not in the labour force and not on long-term leave ²

Length of time since last worked for pay, in any job or business for 2 weeks or more

Main reason stopped working in last job

Main reason not looking for work now

Whether would like to return to or start work

If would like to return to or start work, flexible working arrangements needed to ensure work fits with family or social commitments

Current main employment characteristics

Length of time worked in current main job

Sector of current main job

Occupation of current main job

Industry of current main job

Number of employees at place of work for current main job

Whether provided with paid sick leave in current main job

Whether provided with paid holiday leave in current main job

Whether employed as a casual in current main job

Work preferences

Whether would prefer to reduce current working hours

Main reason for preferring to reduce current working hours

Reasons for not reducing current working hours

Level of balance between work and family responsibilities

Requests for flexible working arrangements made by employees or people on long-term unpaid leave ³

Whether employee has requested changes to working arrangements during the past 12 months

Which changes to working arrangements employee has requested during the past 12 months

Main reason for most recent employee request to change working arrangements

Whether most recent employee request to change working arrangements was approved

Employer's main reason for refusing most recent employee request to change working arrangements

Employee's main reason for not requesting any changes to working arrangements during the past 12 months

Income

Equivalised annual household income

¹ Although it is unlikely that an individual CD would provide reliable estimates, the ABS can aggregate these areas to match groupings that meet the needs of the user and which will provide more reliable estimates.

² Persons not in the labour force, not including persons on long-term unpaid leave.

³ Employees, or persons not in the labour force on long-term unpaid leave.

Previous State Supplementary Surveys (Appendix)

PREVIOUS STATE SUPPLEMENTARY SURVEYS

Date	Topic	State
1990	Community consumption and non-consumption of arts/culture products and services	WA
1990	<u>Usage of legal services</u>	NSW

1991	<u>Crime victims</u>	NSW
1992	Conservations of energy, water and the environment	WA
1992	<u>Household safety</u>	NSW
1993	<u>Workers with family responsibilities</u>	WA
1993	<u>Volunteering emergency services</u>	Tas
1994	Travel to work and school – greater Perth region	WA
1995	<u>Crime and safety</u>	WA
1996	<u>Home safety devices</u>	WA
1996	<u>Work related injuries and illnesses</u>	SA
1997	<u>Part-time, casual and temporary employment</u>	NSW
1997	Use of seniors card	WA
1997	<u>Travel to work and place of education</u>	SA
1997	<u>Transport patterns and preferences</u>	Tas
1998	<u>Household safety</u>	NSW
1998	<u>Housing motivations and intentions</u>	WA
1998	<u>Community safety</u>	Tas
1999	Security precautions and risk avoidance	NSW
1999	<u>Crime and safety</u>	WA
1999	<u>Population mobility</u>	Vic
1999	<u>Usage of emergency services and public transport</u>	ACT
2000	<u>Managing caring responsibilities and paid employment</u>	NSW
2000	<u>Crime and safety</u>	WA
2000	<u>Crime and Safety</u>	SA
2000	<u>Population mobility</u>	Qld
2000	<u>Leisure and cultural participation</u>	Tas
2001	<u>Teleworking</u>	NSW
2001	<u>Safety in the home</u>	Qld
2002	<u>Domestic water use</u>	NSW
2002	<u>Managing paid employment and unpaid caring responsibilities</u>	Qld
2003	<u>Community preparedness for emergencies</u>	NSW
2003	<u>Domestic water use</u>	WA
2003	<u>Bicycle usage</u>	Qld
2003	<u>Household telephone connections</u>	Qld
2004	<u>Housing choices</u>	NSW
2004	<u>Housing motivation and intentions</u>	Qld
2004	<u>Home safety and security</u>	WA
2004	<u>Domestic use of water and energy</u>	SA
2005	<u>Managing care and work</u>	NSW
2005	<u>Housing motivations and intentions</u>	WA
2006	<u>Domestic water and energy use</u>	NSW
2006	<u>Domestic use of water and energy</u>	WA
2006	<u>Preferred working hours of wage and salary earners</u>	Qld
2007	<u>Household preparedness for emergencies</u>	NSW, Vic, Qld & ACT
2007	<u>Community preparedness for emergencies</u>	WA
2008	<u>Residential and workplace mobility, and implications for travel</u>	NSW & Vic
2008	<u>Labour mobility and intentions</u>	WA
2009	<u>Queensland water use and energy conservation</u>	Qld
2009	<u>Household water and energy use</u>	Vic
2009	<u>Household choices related to water and energy</u>	WA
2010	<u>Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility</u>	WA
2010	<u>Flexible Working Arrangements in Queensland</u>	Qld

Quality Declaration - Summary

QUALITY DECLARATION - SUMMARY

INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

For information on the institutional environment of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), including the legislative obligations of the ABS, financing and governance arrangements, and mechanisms for scrutiny of ABS operations, please see [ABS Institutional Environment](#).

RELEVANCE

Each year the ABS conducts individual state specific surveys as part of the Monthly Population Survey (MPS) program. Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility was the December 2010 State Supplementary Survey topic for Victoria.

The survey collected information on persons not in the labour force, current employment characteristics, work preferences and employee requests for flexible work arrangements all of which have implications for participation in the workforce and by extension labour productivity. As such, survey results may provide a further understanding of the Victorian workforce. A breakdown by capital city and balance of state is available in some of the tables within the publication.

TIMELINESS

The Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility survey was conducted as a supplement to the monthly [Labour Force Survey](#) throughout Victoria during the two weeks commencing 5 December 2010.

ACCURACY

The number of fully responding persons for the Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility survey was a total of 3495 households in Victoria.

The total response rate in Victoria was 89%.

Two types of error can occur in estimates that are based on a sample survey: non-sampling error and sampling error. To assist users in understanding the estimate of these errors, relative standard errors (RSEs) are provided for every data cell in tables. For further information please refer to the [Technical Note](#).

COHERENCE

The Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility survey is not part of the ongoing ABS MPS program. Extreme caution must be used when comparing the 2010 survey with other related publications as different methodologies have been used.

The ABS has been conducting surveys related to the topic of Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility on an irregular basis. Previous ABS surveys related to Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility used a variety of sampling methods, estimation methods, concepts, data item definitions and classifications. These include:

- Australian Labour Market Statistics, Australia, July 2011, cat. no. 6105.0
- Australian Social Trends, March 2011, cat. no. 4102.0
- Flexible Working Arrangements in Queensland, October 2010, cat. no. 6342.0.80.002
- Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility, Western Australia, October 2010, cat. no. 6210.5
- Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 2010, cat. no. 6220.0
- Underemployed Workers, Australia, September 2010, cat. no. 6265.0
- Working Time Arrangements, Australia, November 2009, cat. no. 6342.0

- Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia, July 2008 to June 2009, cat. no. 6239.0
- Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation, Australia, April to July 2007, cat. no. 6361.0

INTERPRETABILITY

Information on terminology and other technical aspects associated with statistics from the 2010 State Supplementary Survey are available. These can be found within the [Explanatory Notes](#), [Technical Note](#) and [Glossary](#) sections of this publication.

ACCESSIBILITY

Data from the 2010 State Supplementary Survey, Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility, are available in a variety of formats. The formats available free of charge on the ABS website are:

- main features, which include commentary and graphs
- data cubes which present a variety of data items in 40 tables and 40 Relative Standard Error tables.

If the information you require is not available as a standard product, inquiries can be made by contacting the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or Peter Rochester in Melbourne on (03) 9615 7411.

Technical Note

TECHNICAL NOTE

ESTIMATION PROCEDURE

1 The estimates in this publication were obtained using a post-stratification procedure. This procedure ensured that the survey estimates conformed to an independently estimated distribution of the population, by state, part of state, age and sex, rather than the distribution among respondents.

RELIABILITY OF THE ESTIMATES

2 When interpreting the results of a survey it is important to take into account factors that may affect the reliability of estimates. Such factors can be classified as either sampling or non-sampling error.

NON-SAMPLING ERRORS

3 Errors other than those due to sampling may occur in any type of collection and are referred to as non-sampling error. For this survey, non-sampling error can be introduced through inadequacies in the questionnaire, non-response, inaccurate reporting by respondents, errors in the application of survey procedures, incorrect recording of answers and errors in data entry and processing. The extent to which non-sampling error affects the results of the survey is not precisely quantifiable. Every effort was made to minimise non-sampling error by careful design and testing of the questionnaire, efficient operating procedures and systems and the use of appropriate methodology.

SAMPLING ERRORS

4 Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings, they are subject to sampling variability. That is, they may differ from those estimates that would have been produced if all occupants of all dwellings had been included in the survey. One measure of the likely difference is given by the standard error (SE), which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of dwellings (or occupants) was included. There are about two chances in three (67%) that a sample estimate will differ by less than one SE from the number that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included, and about 19 chances in 20 (95%) that the difference will be less than two SEs.

5 Another measure of the likely difference is the relative standard error (RSE), which is obtained by expressing the SE as a percentage of the estimate:

$$RSE\% = \frac{SE}{\text{estimate}} \times 100$$

6 RSEs for estimates from 2010 *Victorian Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility* survey are published for each individual data cell. The Jackknife method of variance estimation has been used to produce RSE estimates for this publication. This variance estimation method involves the calculation of 30 'replicate' estimates based on 30 different sub-samples of the original sample. The variability of estimates obtained from these sub-samples is used to estimate the sample variability for the main estimate.

7 In the tables in this publication, only estimates (numbers and proportions) with RSEs less than 25% are considered sufficiently reliable for most purposes. However, estimates with larger RSEs have been included and are preceded by an asterisk (e.g. *3.4) to indicate they are subject to high SEs and should be used with caution. Estimates with RSEs greater than 50% are preceded by a double asterisk (e.g. **2.1) to indicate that they are considered too unreliable for general use. In the data cubes in this publication, RSEs are published for each individual data cell.

PROPORTIONS AND PERCENTAGES

8 Proportions formed from the ratio of two estimates are also subject to sampling errors. The size of the error depends on the accuracy of both the numerator and the denominator. A formula to approximate the RSE of a proportion is given below. This formula is only valid when x is a subset of y.

$$RSE\left(\frac{x}{y}\right) = \sqrt{[RSE(x)]^2 - [RSE(y)]^2}$$

DIFFERENCES

9 The sampling error of the difference between two estimates depends on their SEs and the relationship (correlation) between the estimates. An approximate SE of the difference between two estimates (x-y) may be calculated by the following formula:

$$SE(x - y) = \sqrt{[SE(x)]^2 + [SE(y)]^2}$$

10 While this formula will only be exact for differences between separate and uncorrelated characteristics or subpopulations, it is expected to provide a good approximation for all differences likely to be of interest in this publication.

SIGNIFICANCE TESTING

11 A statistical significance test can be performed to indicate whether the survey provides sufficient evidence that a difference between two survey estimates reflects an actual difference in

the population. The standard error of the difference between two corresponding estimates (x and y) can be calculated using the formula in paragraph 9. This standard error is then used to calculate the following test statistic:

$$\frac{|x - y|}{SE(x - y)}$$

12 If the value of this test statistic is greater than 1.96, then we may say there is strong evidence the difference between the survey estimates reflects a difference in the population.

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